

# SERMON

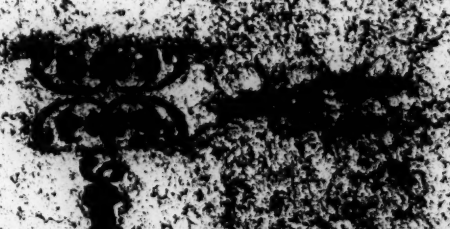
Preached by the Reverend  
MR ALEXANDER HENDERSON

Before the fitting assembly

of the

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Began the 12. of August 1739



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## P R E F A C E.

**W**E have now found an acceſſe to the Throne of Grace, and I pray God that theſe that are aſſembled here together to get this work crowned, may firſt labour to get theſe two things removed; Firſt, The conſcience of our guiltineſſ, alas! there are none that diſcerns or conſiders their ſins, one thing ſhould move our hearts that the Commons of the Land are ſo ignorant that they know no God; and from that proceeds ſuch wickedneſſ. If that Paſtors had been more diligent in inſtructing, this Church had had a better face ere now. Secondly, Our weakneſſ ſtays as a mountain, and we cannot climb unleſſ we be helped, there is no remedie but the brightneſſ of his mercy that he would diſſipate theſe clouds, and no remedie for our vveakneſſ but the Power of his might let us therefore beg the ſame in the Name of JESUS.



## T E X T.

ACTS Chap. V. 32. to the end.

*When they heard that they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.*

*Then stood there up one in the Counsel, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a Doctor of Law, had in reputation among all the People, and commanded to put the Apostles forth a little space.*

*And said unto them, ye men of Israel, take heed to your selves, what ye intend to do as touching these men, &c.*



**T**H E Words that were spoken by Peter and the other Apostles could give no just Cause of Provocation to the Adversaries, for in their Doctrine they insisted upon two innocent Points; One was faith in Christ, that since the Lord whom they crucified was now exalted to be a Prince that therefore they might believe in him, and get Remission of Sins, and the other was Obedience, they ought to obey God rather than men; yet they resolved to kill



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them, and had done so, if the Lord had not  
railed up a man to save them, and he prevail-  
ed that their fury was layed, wherein the A-  
postles rejoiced and doubled their Zeal.

*There are 4. particulars in the Text very  
considerable.*

1. *The bad affects the Apostles preaching  
- had upon the peoples hearts.*
2. *The mean that God did use in Saveing of  
his Servants.*
3. *The unjust proceedings of the Adver-  
saries.*
4. *The Disposition and Diligences of the  
Apostles that ceased not; whereby you  
may learne that often times it comes to  
passe that men in Authority are provock-  
ed against Religion, whither in Obedi-  
ence to God, or in the tryall of their faith  
yet the Lord hes many wayes to save his  
owne Children, and the end shall be joy  
to the Saints and Advancement to the  
Gospell.*

Let us returne to the first, which was the  
bad effects of the preaching, and thar was two  
fold, one in their hearts, another in their he-  
ads, they were cut to the heart, the Word  
is borrowed from the cutting of a Sword of  
Sau, in the 7. Acts, it is said they gualshed

with



with their teeth, and *A&S* 2. 37. it is said they were pricked in their hearts, we finde another effect, but it is different, the one and the other are very like; *Rom.* 11. v. 8. he calls the Spirit of Slumber the Spirit of compunction, the Godly have a pricking and your wicked have a pricking, as in that place, *A&S* 2, 37. they were pricked and tooke Counsel, but they go to them that wounded them, but they do not so here, but would slay them.

The Word of God his very different effects in the Godly, and the wicked, *Rev.* 1: 16. it is like a twoedged Sword, and *Heb.* 4. lively and weighty in Operation it either pricks or cutts, it is either a Word to cure thee or to kill thee. The Ministers of Christ although they be otherwayes of no Reputation, yet if they could handle this Sword a right it should wound; the children of God when they are wounded shoud bear it patiently, they are wounded because of their Sins, the other because they cannot commit Sin. So the one prepares for Christ, the other for Destruction, the one shall end in health the other in wo, and it may seem very Strange that all this tyme we should never have heard a Word or Letter from our Prelats, that have been wounded with the sword; Men and Brethren I will not insist upon their guiltinesse, for we can say no more



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of them then the Text sayes. And they toke  
counfel to slay them, and now we come to the  
Counsell, they resolved to slay them, Coun-  
sell is good and excellent neither hath it been  
derogatory to Authority for as Solomon sayes  
in Counfel there is stability, these matters that  
are not agitat by Counfel are tossed upon fancy.  
as Solomon felt the benefite of using it; 1. be-  
cause it was young. 2. Because it was violent  
consider the Counfel of our Adversaries, it  
was very violent but it had not the other for  
the men wanted not their years, yet they had  
this violence, and they had another bad qua-  
lity to Supply that, and this ye may Learn  
from the 17. Verse, many of them were Saddu-  
ces and so unmeet to be Counsellors, for in Act  
23. you see they beleve not a Resurrection  
and when such unbelievers are Councellers  
their Sentence will be to cut the throat of  
Church an Common Wealth, they care not  
what violence they use to get preferment but  
especially Kirkmen that are Sadduces who  
crueltie shall be exercised by them, but espe-  
cially when they are given over to the Devil  
Ministers when they fall are like Angels that are  
Devills, no men in the Scripture are call-  
Devills but Ministers so they become incarnate  
Devills, give God thanks (and his Majesty  
that his given us this day to meet together a



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no thanks to them that either you are hearing,  
or that and I am preaching to you.

Followes the mean the second thing, which  
was the man that spake and his Speech, the  
man was a Pharisee, he was Learned and a  
Doct<sup>r</sup> of Divinity, for his good parts of re-  
putation naturally and Politickly wise, and  
upon such grounds he convinces them all, and  
further he seems to be a Peaceable man and  
does what he can to save innocent blood but  
there was one thing wanting, Faith in Christ,  
and love to his word. *Act. 22.* It is said, Paul  
was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, as was  
his Schollar so was his Master, he was igno-  
rant and so a persecuter, there is more requi-  
red for accomplishment of a man then the gifts  
of the minde, which this man seems to have, a  
mans natural parts are like a vesture of gold, &  
the gifts of grace like precious stones, but this  
faith is like a precious Diamond in the middle,  
incomparably greater in worth. judge of things  
according to their quality the best of these be-  
side the great jewel are given to the wicked  
and the godly and are bestowed on them for  
other mens good and not their owne but this  
is proper to thy self and for thy self and this  
jewel shall make the rich and it concerns non  
more then Ministers it is required of Ministers  
that they should be Learned and in reputation  
with



with the people, wise, peaceably disposed  
 and Learned *διδασκαλός* altho they cannot come  
 to Eminent yet competent knowledge. It is  
 to exhort and comfort and convince the enor-  
 my not like these men that have sheares and  
 tubs to cut of the woul and carry, their mow  
 away but no care to feed them, I say they  
 should be furnished with all things both in-  
 wardly and outwardly, and it is a pity that we  
 have not a Lebanon for trees to grow in, by  
 Professor here & a Professor there all the plan-  
 ting will Soon be destroyed if there be not  
 place for them, we are all crying for good Mi-  
 nisters, have a care of the good plants that  
 not Learning to read a Sermon and to Spill it  
 the telling it is a pity that these that boast  
 should be so vaine, and als great a pity that we  
 have not sound Divinity, many get other men  
 preachings and these that are Learned should  
 be given to such alterations, yet altho thou  
 wert als Learned als Gamaliel if thou have  
 more, thou art not meet to be a Minister of  
 Christ, you know what intertainment the Ap-  
 postles got at Athens, they mocked them, a  
 man that his a Learned head and a gracele-  
 heart is not fitt for Christs work let us joyne  
 both together of all men that ever I was ac-  
 quainted with, I saw none so profane as Mi-  
 nisters, what was good in this man, let us str-



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to imitate and what he wants let us Labour  
to have our Souls filled with the love of Christ  
and think more of grace than of Learning. Be-  
fore I come to his Speech, see not only Gods  
mercies but also Gods Providences which his  
wisdom had designed and there or two peices  
of his Providence here seen one was the Lord  
brought them back from the gates of death when  
their soul as it were was in their hand; the other  
in, by such a mean as they could not dream of, and  
these two are very ordinarie with the Lord when  
you are in extremity he shewes himself and in  
many wayes, and we may truly say that he hath  
done so with us, that when Episcopacy was  
deeply rooted even then God would cut them  
astoune. Quest: Wherefor doth the Lord so.  
at wt. Answer for 3 reasons, 1 that when the Lord  
comes in Extremity that his hand may be dis-  
countenanced and he get the greater glory, *Isaiah, 33,*  
*tho 7.9. Lebanon is ashamed and cut doune.* 2. For  
the further confusion of the enemies. *Obad. 3.*  
*Whose habitation is in the high rocks who say-*  
*As in their hearts who shall bring me doune to*  
*the ground.* 3 For our encouragement & our Po-  
sterity after us, that we should only put our con-  
fidence in him who is only able to help us.

Now we come to the speech it self, wherein  
Min take notice of his intention, to *Restraine* he  
was a wise man and knew no good would fol-  
low.



low, if they were harmed he knew the Romans would be angry, and that the people had good likeing to them, this was a good and agreeable intention, tho not a pure and pious if he had had any aime to Gods glory and the Gospel of Christ it had been good; I make no question, there are many among us, that have peaceable desires and Laudible intentions, but more is required, let us labour to have pious intentions, not only to have our present troubles settled, it shall soon break forth again, see what is agreeable to his will *Iste est malus, qui suae causae bonus*, he is bad that is good only for himself, let us beseech the Lord that we may have hearts to seek his honour and the enlargement of Christs Kingdom.

Now for his argument, I would have you refrain from these men, if it be of God, it will come to pass; this Argument had its own weakeness; if it be of men it should be hindered; if of God it should have been furthered the thing should put them to tryal; we will not passe what is commendable in him, he proceeds on a good ground, if of men, to be rejected; If of God, to be received *Mat: 21. 25*. The Baptisme of John was it from heaven or of men. *Ephes: 4*. Try the Spirits whether they be of men or God. It was the perpetuall doctrine of the Prophet. Thus saith the Lord, and Paul saith, that which



which I received do I deliver; they that are  
disciples, must be Beleevers, not what man  
saith; First that it is true in matters internall  
not in matters external. Moses when he  
was appointed to build the Tabernacle, he gets  
his directions: Solomon when he built the  
temple had his warrand from David; and lest  
they think Solomons warrand not to be suffici-  
ent, Ezekiah had his warrand according to  
the commandment of David. O but you will  
say, it is not so in the New Testament, there  
are not so many ceremonies; it is a pitifull  
thing, we will not acknowledge that which  
we are ignorant of; distinguish betwixt multi-  
tude and number of ceremonies, they had ma-  
ny we have fewer, shall we think, we have  
not so great light, as these who were to put an  
obscuration on Christ, let us strive to learne  
what Gods will is, when it is of God receive  
it, but when of men reject it. Many ceremo-  
nies have exercised the Church of God many  
times and especially that of the Government  
of the Church, and there are two causes that  
hinder the decideing of it. 1. The hudge jud-  
gement of God upon the congregations, and  
so puts Gods Servants to tryal. 2. Cause is  
the avarice of Churchmen, so long as their a-  
varice lasts there is no end of Episcopacy. 3.  
Because we do not examine, what kinde of  
Govern.



Government Christ gave, the Question  
 Government is not *Juris* but *facti*. VV  
 Is that agreeable with reason and civil Govern  
 ment, No, but *de facto*, what Governm  
 Christ hath established, an office that is *Dei*  
*Divino* should be established, but if it be  
 office of man it ought to be rejected. The  
 great Doctor teaches us that when God fight  
 against man he shall prevaile, but when man  
 fights against God, they shall be found fight  
 against him, *Gen. 11*. The builders of Babel  
 the Lord made every one of them that they  
 knew not what another said, this was an e  
 thing to the Lord, and so the work was inte  
 rupted in building: The Lord is wonderfull  
 building, and can bring downe Babel, gre  
 opposition was, made against Joseph by  
 Brethren, and great opposition against Dav  
 yet Gods counsell behoved to stand, what o  
 position was made against Gods people in  
 gypt in bringing them out of Egypt yet the  
 behoved to come forth: and you know in yo  
 propagation of the Gospel and the work of r  
 formation, and because many his opposed  
 yet it hath gone through. And you know  
 great opposition is been used against this wo  
 by the wicked, but yet blessed be God it ha  
 proclaimed it self through the Land.



brought in two instances to prove that the  
 work of man will come to nought, one of Theu-  
 over he was one that conceived himself to be a  
 prophet but a false one: and Judas he would have  
 swayed the people from giving that duty to  
 be a civill Magistrat that they ought to have  
 The, and there were Sects that followed them;  
 the errors of Religion commonly springe  
 from the Spirit of Theudas, which is a Spi-  
 rit of fantasie, or from the other and that is a  
 Spirit of rebellion and that is not of God.

Consider alltho they be the many yet there  
 are morelikewyes as there are Spirits contrarie  
 to the Spirit of Theudas, and this is your Spi-  
 rit of Pharaoh, who said who is the Lord that  
 I should serve him, and that is Atheisme,  
 by which other is contrarie to Judas & that is Herods,  
 that runs to flattery, and gives man that, that  
 is contrary to God.

As Atheisme is an abomination before God,  
 is Rebellion and flattery the true reformed  
 Religion abhorres disobedience, and gives to  
 us as far that which is Cæsars, and sure we pro-  
 pose a harmeles Religion. I would exhort you  
 know two things, first to the course of faith which  
 shewes godlesness and vaine conceits of men  
 I am now pleading for the innocency of  
 Religion) ye know what our adversaries have  
 charged against us, that we are guilty of many  
 crimes



crimes and tricks, and that we have made  
 ople to feigne themselves inspired with  
 Spirit of divination, which is against  
 Truth. The second thing is the course of  
 bedience there was never a greater friend  
 Kings then Christ, there is no question  
 about *Judas* of Galilee his part, whether  
 should pay tax or not nether of that in war  
 verence to Princes or that respect we can  
 him, I wish his owne prayers were never  
 that doth not heartily pray for his Maje  
 but the Question is what is his part in Reli  
 and matters Ecclesiastick, it is both said  
 printed that I should have spoken much,  
 my fellow Brethren (the rest of the Cove  
 ters) would not allow of that I said and say  
 regall inspection belongs to Kings over Ch  
 matters, and that the King was Supreme  
 op over all this Kingdom, now my adv  
 ries think I have made him a Churchman,  
 ignorant but not So, as for the head of  
 Church we acknowledge none but Christ  
 for the other *Episcopus* is a name that  
 well proper to a civill Magistrat as to a  
 tual, therefore Constantine sayth, *Vos  
 Episcopi intra, ego extra.* Next that  
*Custos utriusque Tabulae*, Vindication be  
 unto him, who carries the Sword of San  
 and coercion, and Convocation of Syn



now this present Generall Assembly is con-  
 vened & as he conveens so he should examine  
 it, if he finde any thing against the Word  
 of God he should reject it, thus I speak not of  
 a negative voice his Majestie hath.

And now I have showne the particulars I  
 have been taxed upon, hoping this honou-  
 rable Assembly, will further consider of it and  
 now I come to speak one word to your Com-  
 missioners Grace who represents his Majestie.  
 As for your Grace his Majesties Commissio-  
 ner we beseech you to see that Cæsar have his  
 due, but let not Cæsar have what is due to  
 God, and belongs to him, God has exalted  
 your Grace to many high places within these  
 few years, and more especially now, be thank-  
 ful and labour to exalt Christs Throne, some  
 are exalted like Haman and some like Mor-  
 decai.

I pray God these good parts the Lord hath  
 endowed you with you may use them a right,  
 as the Israelites when they came out of Egypt  
 did give all their Silver and Gold for building  
 of the Tabernacle, I tell your Gr: ye must be  
 accountable for all your actions especially in  
 these publick busineses.

And to you right honourable and right Wor-  
 shipfull Members of this Assembly, go on in  
 your Zeal constantly, it is not true Zeal that  
 growes



growes cold, but the nearer it is the end  
be the hotter if it shall please God that by  
hands the light of the Gospel shall be contin  
Surely it shall be a refreshment to you and  
children that you should have lived when  
light of the Gospel was almost extinguished  
now to see it quickned again after all  
Troubles. With a holy Moderation go on  
Zeal is a good Servant but an ill Master,  
a ship that has a full saile and wants a rudder

VVe have need of Christian prudence  
ye know what ill speeches our adversaries  
made upon us let it be seen to his Majestie  
this Government can very well stand with  
Monarchiall Government, hereby we  
gain his Majesties favour and God shall get  
Glory to whom be praise for ever and ev  
Amen.

**FINIS.**